

Govt. plans to boost rural employment

Urban migration: Scores of rural workers have to move to towns to find employment. C. Ratheesh Kumar

The Rural Development Ministry, in a bid to address one of the biggest challenges for the Modi government, is in the midst of examining proposals that promise to leapfrog job creation for the rural youth.

The proposals emerged from a two-day conclave the Ministry hosted last week, that was addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Several out of the box suggestions such as a migrant tracking system, low-cost accommodation for urban workers, and changing the word “labour” to “professional workers,” are now being compiled into a draft note that will eventually be sent to the Prime Minister’s Office.

“Our ministry already runs the biggest rural employment programme in the form of MNREGA. Now, we are focussing on specific livelihood missions to scale up employability of rural youth,” said a senior official of the ministry, who did not wish to be identified.

The note on skill development, accessed by *The Hindu*, points out that the Ministry’s flagship skill development programme — Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramin Kaushal Yojana — needs to “reinvent itself to reach the next level.”

Experts have suggested a cluster approach, where villages with similar socio-economic conditions should be clubbed and every village should have a *gram vikas prerak* (village development motivator), and call the “bottom of the pyramid as the foundation of the pyramid.”

Rural digital index

“Like a smart city index, we need to have a rural digital index,” the note points out and says skill development programmes of the government should work backwards from the future and link it to the market demands.

“Link skill to entrepreneurship development and do not over-emphasize wage employment,” reads one of the 18 recommendations that have so far been crystallized.

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